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Over and over, I keep hearing that the farmers and the ranchers make up three percent of the country's population, yet that we feed all of the United States and 30 percent of the whole world. Ambitious politicians and studious statisticians seem to dwell on those figures, but as far as it having any effect on the urbanites, herders and planters don't rate any higher than coyotes or boll weevils do out in the rural areas.

On the trips I make to town, I sure don't notice any differences to my well being. On the freeways, my farm license doesn't clip a peg off the perils of travel. In supermarkets, determined housewives sideswipe my cart and hub my boot heels just like I was a full stomached consumer. You'd think, as minute a minority as we are, and as much as people like to eat, that we'd be under heavy security to see that none of us were lost in the perils of life, but that isn't the case at all.

Continuously, the newscasters blab that we'd better not alienate Mexico or the other oil producing countries, or we'll end up with the streets jammed in dry tank Volkswagens. I charge that one big epidemic of rural distemper followed by the outland flu would hurt this country worse than being out of gasoline.

Whether we had any outboard motor oil wouldn't be too critical without the Post Toasties and fried bacon it takes in the mornings to launch a trip to the lake McDonald's and those other hamburger chains use a precious small amount of meat, but the stain off their griddles can't replace the need for a few old packer cows. Sure it's a good idea to court the OPEC countries and scrape and bow to the Bolivians and Mexicans, but as grand as meat extending recipes are, the country still needs a starter for the menus of the day.

From the looks of the hombres around the various outposts in the Shortgrass Country the three percent figure sounds high. At the post office in Mertzon, I'll see 55 oilmen before even one herder appears. Furthermore, on the cold mornings like we've been having for a week, the drive to feed so many people has probably diminished. On a small spread like three percent, defectors and dropouts could be a grave problem. As old as the business is getting, what could be the mainstay of the nation's food supply just might be the main support for televised football and indoor domino games.

Another thing that I don't like is the way our leaders use the food that's sent overseas. Every time they send a box of crackers or a round of cheese, I get the feeling that included on the box top and stamped on the rind are the latest methods of destruction under development by the U. S. Arsenal.

When we started shipping milo to Russia, I did think that was the end of the Commies' urge to conquer. Everybody I ever knew in this country who ever got involved with milo sure ended up whipped. Those old boys up at the feedlots on the plains certainly didn't have any visions of world conquest in the years they overdosed on \$6.50 milo and 60 cent cattle. I expected the Russians to do the same thing, but I guess they must have used their grain for vodka instead of cattle.

City folks had better wake up and start protecting the farm community. Somebody besides politicians out polishing their speaking style and tractor salesmen after

sales had better look out for the country people. We may not be great shakes compared to the pools of oil in Saudi Arabia, but around supertime we are mighty important.